

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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City of San Diego's Parks After Dark Program Delivers Fun for All

**SUMMER MIGHT BE COMING TO AN END,
BUT POSITIVE MEMORIES LINGER, THANKS TO BELOVED CITY
PROGRAM**

SAN DIEGO – Summer 2026 saw more than 34,800 San Diegans served through the City of San Diego's Parks After Dark events at community parks across the city during the months of June and July. Through this impactful program, more than 16,500 hot meals were also served to youth attending these events.

"This was a record-breaking summer for Parks After Dark, with more than 34,800 San Diegans joining us for nearly 100 events across the city," said Mayor Todd Gloria. **"Five years after launching this program, it's exciting to see thousands of kids and families making the most of their neighborhood parks and everything they have to offer. That's exactly what these public spaces are for, and I'm proud to see Parks After Dark continue to grow."**

This year, the Parks After Dark program turned five community parks into places of connection, entertainment and excitement for the whole family, with activities varying from games and live music to arts and crafts and sports clinics - all while providing useful community resources to its participants. Locations included City Heights Recreation Center, Linda Vista Recreation Center, Memorial Recreation Center, Skyline Hills Recreation Center and Silver Wing Recreation Center.

"Every neighborhood deserves parks that are safe, welcoming and full of life. Parks After Dark shows what it looks like when we invest in public spaces as places for neighbors to connect, have fun and build community," said Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera, who represents District 9. **"For thousands of San Diego families, a free meal and a safe place for kids to play have made San Diego a better place for them to live. At the same time, evenings spent with neighbors have created life long memories. I'm proud to see this program continue to grow."**

In addition to hot meals provided for young people, the San Diego Parks Foundation also distributed 500 backpacks filled with notebooks, pens, pencils and other school supplies to ensure children attending the event could show up to school prepared for the year ahead.

Several City departments and partners contributed to making Parks After Dark an unforgettable experience, including San Diego Police Department, City Park Rangers, City Aquatics, San Diego Parks Foundation, County of San Diego, Price Philanthropies, Prebys Foundation and Feeding San Diego, which distributed produce and goods to approximately 100 families every Friday at all participating locations.

"Parks After Dark continues to be an essential source of safe space for everyone in the summertime," said Andy Field, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department. **"We are proud of our City staff and our community partners that once again came through in supporting our efforts to provide these activities, which bring our parks to life in the evening hours, every summer. We always invite all families to join us, and – like every year – families didn't miss the call."**

Parks After Dark is one of many City programs designed to offer safe and engaging opportunities for local youth and their families. For more information on City programs tailored for young San Diegans and other resources for families, please visit sandiego.gov/Youth-Programs.

The San Diego Parks Foundation first launched the program in 2022 to provide families and children in high-crime neighborhoods with free, safe summer activities. A study by UC San Diego School of Social Studies reported decreases in neighborhood crime immediately after the first edition of the program, with hundreds of children coming together each week to partake in all the special activities made possible by the City and its partners.

"Parks After Dark is more than a summer program — it's proof of what happens when a community comes together," said Kim Mathis, Vice President of Programs at the San Diego Parks Foundation. **"This year, 34,821 residents joined us across 99 events, and together we were able to provide more than 15,000 meals to kids in our neighborhoods. These evenings create safe, welcoming spaces where neighbors become friends and parks become the heart of the community. We are proud of what we accomplished this season and grateful to everyone who made it possible."**

"Parks After Dark is a great example of what is possible when committed partners come together around a shared vision for youth and families," said Jennette Lawrence Shay, Chief Operating Officer of Price Philanthropies Foundation for Price Philanthropies. **"Our long-standing commitment to creating opportunities for young people includes investing in the programs, partnerships and community spaces that help them thrive. We are grateful to the many people who make Parks After Dark possible each year and help bring that commitment to life."**

“Parks are more than places to play—they are places where people come together, build relationships and feel a sense of belonging,” said Emily Young, Vice President of Programs at Prebys Foundation. **“Parks After Dark shows what’s possible when public spaces are activated with intention and community at the center. We’re proud to support this work and the many partners creating safe, joyful and welcoming experiences for young people and families across San Diego.”**

The City looks forward to continuing these valued partnerships and collaborative efforts to bring Parks After Dark back next year. Together, we remain committed to creating safe, welcoming and engaging opportunities for our community to connect, participate and enjoy our parks.



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